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AUTHOR Broome, Benjamin J.
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ABSTRACT

Participants in an intercultural encounter bring with them differences in values, beliefs, attitudes, and world views. The communication of these differences often results in threatening and defensive behavior. The facilitating attitudes of open-mindedness and nonevaluation promote understanding and a respect for differing experience and perspectives rather than arouse defensiveness. Although these attitudes may be somewhat "universal," the type of messages that are appropriate for communicating these attitudes may vary from culture to culture. A study proposed that the use of open expression encourages responses that are oriented more to understanding the other's viewpoint than defending one's own. Three conditions were used to test the hypothesis: nonopen, open personal, and open nonpersonal. Ninety college students were randomly assigned to one of the three conditions and instructed to read what was supposedly an excerpt from tapes made in the laboratory of American and foreign students discussing their roommate problems. All statements were criticisms of some aspect of American life made by the foreign students. The results of a follow-up questionnaire strongly suggested that the expression of differences in intercultural encounters is received in a less defensive manner when the speaker takes personal responsibility for, states the origin of, and cites behavioral evidence for the feelings and perceptions. (HOD)

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THE EXPRESSION OF DIFFERENCES IN INTERCULTURAL ENCOUNTERS

Benjamin J. Broome

Speech Communication & Human Relations

University of Kansas

Lawrence, Kansas 66045

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THE EXPRESSION OF DIFFERENCES IN INTERCULTURAL ENCOUNTERS

Introduction

The notion of "cultural difference" lies at the heart of the study of intercultural communication. Several theorists (Stewart, 1976; Prosser, 1978; & Asuncion-Lande, 1980) have suggested that, while similarities play a necessary function in the exchange of messages, intercultural communication takes place in a matrix of differences due to cultural backgrounds and referents. These cultural differences may be in relation to activity orientation, language, non-verbal code, role prescription, thought patterning, or relational orientation (Asuncion-Lande, 1980).

At the same time, however, it must be recognized that differences can be and often are threatening to individuals. It is the familiar and the similar that are trusted; the unfamiliar and the dissimilar arouses alarm. The nature of persons is to develop a somewhat stable and consistent framework for viewing the world. As George Kelly notes:

> Man looks at his world through transparent patterns or templets which he creates and then attempts to fit over the realities of which the world is composed. The fit is not always very good. Yet without such patterns the world appears to be such an undifferentiated homogeneity that man is unable to make any sense out of it. Even a poor fit is more helpful

to him than nothing at all (1963, pp. 8-9).

When another person is encountered who views the world with a different "templet," our own perspective is challenged and perhaps called into question. While this "challenge" can be the impetus for change leading to personal growth and a broadening of one's viewpoint, the "calling into question" of one's perspective quite often results in anxiety, tension, fear, and defensiveness. As one author points out: "Confronted with difference, men may deny it, obscure it, confuse it, or evade it in order to protect their own assumptive world against the meanings of others" (Barnlund, 1974, p. 36).

Barnlund (1974) suggests that threat arises from three different factors: the source of the communication, the content of the communication, or the manner of communicating. Sometimes in intercultural communication the other person is feared, hated, or otherwise viewed in such a way that defensive reactions are provoked. At other times the subject being discussed provokes a fear of the unknown, fear of possible failure, or a host of other uncertainties. Quite often, however, defensiveness results from the manner in which the differences are expressed. There are many different ways of saying the same thing; some of these techniques complicate communication, while others promote a more positive climate for the exchange of messages.

The purpose of this paper is to present the design and results of a laboratory study which explored the effects upon communication of contrasting manners for expressing differences in intercultural

encounters. An experimental study is described in which American students responded to foreign students who expressed criticism of the United States using different types of expression. The following sections present the hypotheses for study, the design of the study, the results, and a discussion of these results.

The Communication of Differences: Facilitating Attitudes

To reduce the defensiveness that is often associated with the communication of differences, the threat of those differences to one's assumptive world must be reduced. As suggested earlier, this threat springs from the sender, the content, or the manner of communicating. Often it is not possible to change the status or rank of the person being communicated with, and the content of intercultural communication is quite often different values, beliefs, and attitudes. It is argued here that source differences may appear less threatening, and that content differences can be rendered less disruptive, when facilitating interpersonal attitudes toward differences are communicated. The following attitudes seem to promote communication, rather than produce threat and arouse defensiveness.

Open-mindedness

Understanding is facilitated when the participants in an intercultural encounter engage in open and honest communication

with each other, accepting and respecting the experience of one another. When differences are asserted dogmatically, there is little room for discussion. However, if the dissimilar other is perceived as open to discussion on attitudes which disagree with one's own, then one may be less defensive and more willing to explore the different viewpoint.

This notion is given credence in a study by Hodges and Byrne (1972). These researchers hypothesized that responses on a measure of attraction-rejection would be more positive toward a dissimilar stranger whose attitudes were expressed in open-minded, rather than dogmatic, terms. They reasoned that dogmatic wording (after Rokeach, 1960) increases the threatening effect of disagreeing attitudes; conversely, open-minded wording might reduce threat. In two experiments subjects responded to either similar or dissimilar strangers who stated their opinions in either dogmatic or open-minded fashion. In both experiments attraction was significantly more positive toward the dissimilar stranger when his attitudes were expressed in an open-minded fashion.

Millar and Millar (1976) discuss the difference between a thoughtful decision and a judgment. The distinction between judgments and decisions is a subtle one. A judgment is a belief, perception, or evaluation which states an absolute property of something or a person, implying that the speaker will not change his/her mind. It asserts some belief which is assumed to be true. A judgment includes the implication that evidence is provided, but

it is not necessarily stated; reasons may be found when asked, but the speaker's mind is set before looking for supporting evidence.

A decision, on the other hand, states that because of a certain set of reasons, behaviors, observations, etc., the speaker has decided to accept a certain perception as the most accurate one. The speaker recognizes that there is more than one way of appraising the situation, and so a different decision may be possible. Decisions are more tentative than judgments since they specify a probable relationship between some set of behaviors and some assertion. The possibility of reaching a new and different decision remains.

When differences are expressed in an open-minded manner, it indicates that the speaker has put thought and energy into making a decision. Because decisions can be discussed and negotiated on a relatively non-threatening manner, the listener may feel free to respond and further seek the speaker's perspective. The listener may be drawn toward the speaker and his/her point of view rather than toward a defense of one's own ideas.

Nonevaluativeness

Understanding between persons is enhanced when a nonevaluative atmosphere is created. When an undercurrent of criticism runs beneath a conversation the participants will tend to protect themselves, trying to prevent damage to their self-concept. However, if people see that they will be accepted and respected

for who they are, they will be more likely to express and explore a wider range of differences. In a non-evaluative atmosphere, where the intent is to comprehend rather than criticize, people feel secure enough to talk openly and freely with each other.

Carl Rogers (1961) has suggested that the major barrier to communication may be the very natural tendency to judge, to evaluate the statement of another person or group. When it is assumed that if differences exist then one person must be wrong (usually the other!), people speak cautiously and listen suspiciously. Barnlund (1974) says that defenses are provoked not so much by the expectation of differences as by the expectation of criticism. Nonevaluative communication, according to Gibb (1961), involves the presentation of feelings which do not ask or imply that the receiver change behavior or attitude.

Nonevaluativeness communicates a respect for differing experience and perspectives. It indicates a flexibility and willingness to consider new experience. This attitude is expressed whenever there is tentative statement of opinions, curiosity for alternative views, and a flexible approach to arguments. The expression of differences in this manner makes it possible for an atmosphere of understanding to develop between participants in an intercultural encounter. Listeners are invited to share and respond empathically, seeking each other's point of view rather than defending their own.

The Communication of Differences: Facilitating Message Characteristics

MacDoniels (1974), in his discussion of the type of feedback considered most facilitative to learning and personal growth, combined the literature on openness, or self-disclosure, with the guidelines specified by Egan (1970) and Bradford, et. al (1964) for facilitative feedback, to construct an operational definition of the construct "openness." Specifically, he coined the term "open expression" and defined it as "the offering of personal (owned) information (feelings and perceptions) about events (actions, behaviors, expressions) which are mutually relevant (related to the 'here and now') in an unambiguous manner" (MacDoniels, 1974, p. 4). An open expression, then, refers to a type of verbal statement which states the speaker's personal perception or feeling of something or someone concerning self, others, events, or behaviors that is important in the immediate situation and which includes some behavioral evidence or reason for the perception or feeling (Millar & Millar, 1976).

The facilitating attitudes of open-mindedness and non-evaluativeness, which were described in the previous section, must be communicated to the listener in order for them to have the desired effect. "Open expression" as described above, is seen as a manifestation of the kinds of attitudes which promote understanding rather than arouse defensiveness. Open expression embodies the attitudes of open-mindedness and nonevaluativeness

in the following ways.

The Speaker's Personal Point of View is Expressed

An open statement has a high degree of "I-ness" contained within the verbal message. The more the individual takes clear responsibility for the perception or feeling expressed, the more open the message. When the speaker "owns" his/her statement, the listener can know that the speaker is not putting forth an opinion that is assumed to be true of reality, but is simply stating a personal way of looking at things. In effect, taking responsibility for one's statements communicates the underlying message of: "This is what I think about the issue, but I realize that it is only my opinion and not a characteristic of the object involved." When generalized sources are stated to possess certain characteristics, then that object or person stands evaluated and judged. The underlying message in general statements is: "This is the way things are; anyone with common sense would be able to see the same thing." Letting the listener know that personal responsibility is taken for the perception or feeling communicates both flexibility and a nonjudgmental stance.

The Origin of the Perception or Feeling is Specified

In an open expression the speaker directs his/her statement specifically to the person being talked about, or pin-points what events or what aspects of the event are being discussed. The more the origin is specified, the more open the expression. When the origin of the speaker's statement is specified, the listener can

more easily know what is being described, because clearer data are presented. When a person says: "Because my roommate's stereo was stolen last week...," rather than: "Because of all the stealing that goes on here...," it is easier to follow up with the discussion, and the listener knows that the speaker is not simply repeating something that someone else has said, but is speaking from personal experience and personal observation. With open expression it becomes easier to determine on what the speaker is basing the perception or feeling.

Behavioral Evidence is Cited for the Information Expressed

An open statement refers to why the speaker feels, thinks, or intends what he/she does. The behaviors are cited on which the speaker bases the information transmitted. The more behaviorally specific the justification given for the perception or feeling expressed, the more open the expression. When the speaker explicitly states why on what behaviors, perceptions or feelings are based, a decision is implied rather than a judgment. Discussion is then possible because a different decision may be made. The listener is invited to respond because specific reasons, rationale, or causes may be discussed in a non-threatening manner. On the other hand, when no behavioral evidence is cited, the listener may perceive that the speaker has made a judgment and will not change his/her mind. Communicating to the listener that other ways of viewing reality is possible encourages the listener to move toward understanding of the speaker's viewpoint

rather than defend his/her own opinion.

Appropriateness of Open Expression

The making of open statements is both time consuming and risky. Often there is not the time nor is it appropriate to state the basis for one's beliefs. Statements that encourage discussion and negotiation should not be made unless one is willing to discuss and negotiate. This implies, of course, a willingness to change one's point of view, the courage to be imperfect, and the willingness to accept one's mistakes. Open statements, then, are a matter of choice. Several considerations should influence this choice.

One criterion that Millar and Millar (1976) suggest for making this choice is the existence of a person-to-person rather than a role-to-role relationship. They argue that open statements are appropriate when two individuals are attempting to establish, maintain, or change a personal relationship. They maintain that open expression may be either irrelevant and/or detrimental when the relationship is teacher-to-student, employer-to-employee, etc. The information may be used against the speaker in the competitive politics of an organization, or it may cause a "reverse halo effect." Therefore, it is important to keep in mind that open expression may enhance the process of understanding when the relationship is person-to-person and the participants are motivated to understand each other.

Especially important for the intercultural situation, however, is the following note of caution. While open-mindedness

and nonevaluativeness may be somewhat "universal" facilitating attitudes, the type of messages which are appropriate for communicating these attitudes may vary from culture to culture. For instance, in American culture it seems quite useful to advocate the use of "I statements." However, in other cultures the norm is against the use of statements which focus attention on the self. In these cultures it is generally more acceptable to talk in generalities, so that attention is not drawn to the self. In this case the use of open expression, as described above, would be an inappropriate way to convey the attitudes of open-mindedness and nonevaluativeness. Therefore, one must consider the values of a particular culture before advocating the use of open expression.

Finally, it must be remembered that interpersonal attitudes are conveyed both verbally and nonverbally. Any discrepancy between the verbal and nonverbal messages can wipe out any effect that the verbal message may have intended to communicate. When a person uses open expression to state opinions and criticisms, yet speaks with a cold voice or constantly interrupts the other's response, the defensiveness that results may be greater than that generated by attempts to control and change. The message that is generally attributed to a confusion of codes is one of "deceit," which is known not to generate open discussion. Nonverbal messages must be congruent for open expression to have its desired effect.

Hypotheses for Study

From the preceding discussion it is suggested that open expression may enhance the process of moving toward understanding because it draws the listener toward the speaker, inviting the listener to seek the speaker's perspective and encouraging the listener to make efforts to approximate the speaker's outlook. Based on this reasoning, the following hypotheses are proposed for study:

I. When one of the participants in an intercultural encounter expresses differences using a high degree of open expression, the other participant's response will be judged
   a. more descriptive than evaluative,
   b. more problem oriented than control oriented,
   c. more receptive than unreceptive,
   d. more other oriented than self oriented, and
   e. more involved than detached

   than when the differences are expressed using non-open expression.

In effect, what is being proposed is that the use of open expression encourages responses which are oriented more to understanding the other's viewpoint than defending one's own. Participants seek to comprehend the other's statements, to collaborate in defining a mutual problem and seeking its solution, to obtain more information, to take into account the other's frame of

reference, and to move in the direction of understanding. In essence, the participants use communication which is "empathic" in nature (see Broome, 1978) in response to open expression, while participants use more defensive communication when in response to differences stated using non-open expression.

II. When one of the participants in an intercultural encounter expresses differences using a high degree of open expression, the other participant will report a greater desire to understand the differences than when the differences are expressed using non-open expression.

In effect, what is being proposed is that open expression creates an attitude of "discovery." The participants want to learn about each other. They are interested in what the other person said and want to know the causes of the other's perception. The participants feel receptive to more feedback from each other, and they feel that their attributions are flexible and may change as they acquire more information. In essence, the participants feel a real desire to know more, a motivation to know where the other is coming from, when open expression is used to state differences, while non-open expression leads to a more defensive response.

Methodology and Procedures

Following a pilot study, the hypotheses which were developed in the previous section were tested in a single experiment involving three conditions: (1) non-open; (2) open personal; (3) open non-personal. The context for the experiment involved American students' responses to foreign students who made criticisms of various aspects of American culture. Subjects were randomly assigned to one of the three conditions and instructed to read what was supposedly an excerpt from tapes made in the laboratory of American and foreign students discussing their roommate problems. All subjects were informed that the statements they were reading were made by the foreign student to their American roommate. All statements read by the subjects were criticisms of some aspect of American life. The content of these criticisms was randomly varied over three topics: (1) discrimination against minorities; (2) lack of knowledge of other cultures; and (3) energy waste. An analysis of variance was conducted between these three content areas to insure similarity of content. Subjects in condition one read criticisms which were stated in a non-open manner; subjects in condition two read statements which were stated in a very open manner and addressed to issues directly involving the roommate; subjects in condition three read criticisms which were stated in an open manner and addressed to issues which did not directly involve the American roommate.

After reading the criticisms, subjects responded to a three-part questionnaire. In part one, they were asked to write down their response to the foreign student who had made these statements. In part two they were asked to respond to a 33-item questionnaire. Part three asked for certain demographic data. All subjects were debriefed following the collection of data. A total of 90 subjects (58 women and 32 men) responded to the questionnaire. Subjects were enrolled in the introductory speech classes of a large midwestern university. They volunteered for the experiment and received course credit for their participation. Two questionnaires were eliminated because subjects did not follow directions, leaving a total of 88 responses to be analyzed (N = 88).

Following the completion of the data gathering process, the responses to the open-ended portion of the questionnaire were judged on five seven-point bi-polar scales (scored one for high defensive response through seven for high empathic response). Four graduate students in the Speech Department were recruited as judges for rating the subjects' responses. The scales used in this rating process were constructed from the hypotheses stated earlier and included the following dimensions: (1) evaluation/description; (2) control orientation/problem orientation; (3) unreceptivity/receptivity; (4) self orientation/other orientation; (5) detachment/involvement. Figure 1 contains a definition of these categories. The judges were trained in the use of these categories and an overall interjudge reliability score of .847

(using Pearson product moment correlations) was obtained.

Figure 1 about here

The scores received from the judges' ratings were analyzed using a one-way analysis of variance between the three experimental conditions. Where judges differed on a particular rating, the mean of their ratings was used as the score to be included in the analysis.

Part two of the questionnaire consisted of 33 statements on which subjects were asked to indicate the extent of their agreement-disagreement on a seven-point scale. The statements were designed to tap the subjects' attitude toward the stimulus person, and included statements related to attraction, negative affect, and desire to learn about the stimulus person. The responses to these statements were analyzed first by factor analysis and then with one-way analyses of variance between experimental conditions of the scale score of those questions which loaded on interpretable factors.

Results

Analysis of Written Responses

It was hypothesized that open expression of differences would elicit responses that would be judged to be more descriptive than evaluative, more problem oriented than control oriented, more receptive than unreceptive, more other oriented than self oriented, and more involved than detached. As described in the last section, these hypotheses were tested by having judges rate subjects' responses to criticisms made by foreign students. These

criticisms were stated in either a non-open manner, an open personal manner, or an open nonpersonal manner. It was expected that subjects receiving criticisms stated in a open manner (either personal or nonpersonal) would respond in a more positive manner than those subjects receiving non-open criticism.

Table 1 reports the results of the judges' ratings of the subjects' responses. The analyses of variance showed highly significant results ($p < .001$) on each of the five scales used to rate the responses. The results of a multiple range test (Tukey-B procedure) for these scales showed that in every case the non-open condition received significantly lower ($p < .001$) ratings than the other two conditions. On two of the scales (descriptive/evaluative and receptive/unreceptive) the open personal condition received higher ratings than the open nonpersonal condition. The differences on these two scales between condition two and three were not expected.

The results, then, strongly support the hypotheses that responses to open expression of differences will be judged less defensive than responses to non-open expression. A significant F ratio was obtained on each of the five scales, with the mean of the non-open group significantly lower than the means of each of the open groups. Thus, responses to open expression of criticisms were more descriptive, problem oriented, receptive, other oriented, and involved than responses to non-open expression.

Table 1 about here

Analysis of Attitude Questionnaire

It was hypothesized that subjects exposed to open expression of differences would report a greater desire to learn about the stimulus person than would subjects exposed to non-open expression of differences. As described in the last section, this hypothesis was tested by having subjects respond to a 33-item questionnaire designed to tap attitudes toward the other. It was expected that subjects who were exposed to open expression would report a more positive attitude than subjects who were exposed to non-open expression.

The responses to the 33-item questionnaire were used to establish a correlation matrix for a factor analysis. An orthogonal rotation using the Kaiser normalized varimax procedure produced ten factors which accounted for 69.9% of the total variance. When factor loadings greater than 0.50 (and 0.30 higher than the same items' loading on any other factor) were required to assign items to factors, ten of the items failed to load on any of the ten factors and were eliminated from further analysis.

The 23 remaining items were reanalyzed with the Varimax orthogonal rotation, as well as with an oblique rotation. From this factor analysis, six factors emerged, accounting for 67.4% of the variance. Of this partial variance, factor one accounted for 65.5% of the remaining variance, and factor two accounted for 10.2% of the remaining variance. Using the same criteria as earlier for assigning items to factors, only the first two factors

consisted of more than two items. Factor one was composed of six items, and factor two was composed of three items. The Varimax and oblique rotations yielded approximately the same results. Items composing each factor and their associated factor loadings from the orthogonal and oblique solutions are given in Table 2 (for factor one) and Table 3 (for factor 2). Factor one was labeled "Empathic Attitude," and factor two was labeled "Negative Affect." These two factors showed a correlation (from the oblique solution) of +.209.

Table 2 about here

Table 3 about here

Items on factor one reference a desire to learn about the speaker for purposes of understanding him/her. High scores on this factor represent a desire to know more about what the speaker said, interest in getting to know the speaker better, and expression of motivation to understand the speaker.

The three items loading on factor two assess the degree of negative feelings aroused by the speaker's statements. High scores on this scale represent a low need to change the speaker's opinion, a low degree of anger, and a low degree of irritation.

A scale score was computed for each individual by summing responses to all items on factor one. A one-way analysis of

variance between experimental conditions was conducted for this scale score. An F ratio of 2.538 (df = 2,87, p <.08) was obtained. While the non-open group (X = 29.63) was lower than the open personal group (X = 32.46) and the open nonpersonal group (X = 33.56), the difference was only slightly significant.

A scale score was also computed for factor two, and a one-way analysis of variance was conducted for this scale score. An F ratio of 9.150 (df = 2,87, p <.001) was obtained. A multiple range test showed that subjects in the non-open condition held significantly more negative attitudes toward the speaker than did subjects in the other two groups; the open personal and non-personal groups did not differ significantly.

In summary, factor analysis of the attitude questionnaire produced two interpretable factors which were labeled Empathic Attitude and Negative Affect. Results do not completely support the hypothesis that open expression of differences will elicit a more positive learning attitude than will non-open expression of differences. The difference between conditions was slightly significant, but it did not reach the conventional .05 level of probability. However, a highly significant difference was obtained for the Negative Affect scale, indicating that less negative feelings are aroused by open expression than by non-open expression.

Discussion of Results

The overall purpose of this investigation has been to explore the effects of various manners of expressing differences in intercultural encounters. It was pointed out that differences are often threatening, resulting in defensive responses. The communication of an open-minded and non-evaluative attitude was proposed as a way of removing some of the threat associated with differences. The message characteristics of "open expression," as defined by MacDoniels (1974), seem to convey the above facilitating attitudes. It was hypothesized that the open expression of differences would result in less defensive responses and a more positive "learning attitude" than would non-open expression. An experimental study was conducted to test this idea, in which American students were asked to respond to criticisms of American culture expressed in either an open or non-open manner.

Interpretation of Findings

Written responses. Results of the study strongly support the hypothesis that responses to differences stated in an open manner will be less defensive than responses stated in a non-open manner. A statistically significant difference between open and non-open conditions was found on all five scales related to this hypothesis. Responses in the open condition were rated more descriptive than evaluative, more problem oriented than control oriented, more receptive than unreceptive, more other oriented

than self oriented, and more involved than detached than were responses in the non-open condition. It seems then, that communicating to the listener that one is speaking for him/her self, that one is speaking from personal experience and personal observation, that one's perceptions and feelings are based on specific reasons, and (perhaps most importantly) that one recognizes and respects different viewpoints, promotes rather than discourages discussion and understanding.

Earlier it was suggested that the open-minded expression of differences would elicit a low degree of defensiveness because a decision is implied rather than a judgment. Because decision can be discussed and negotiated in a relatively non-threatening manner, the listener may feel free to respond and further seek the speaker's perspective rather than defend his/her own. Two other suggestions are offered here for interpreting the findings of this study.

Argyle (1969) says: "During social interaction it is very common for an act by A to be followed by a similar act from B" (p. 171). He calls this "response matching," which is similar to what others have called the "reciprocity phenomenon." Basically, this notion suggests that communication of one kind tends to elicit a similar type of communication: jokes lead to jokes, giving opinions leads to the other person giving opinions, self-disclosure leads to self-disclosure, etc. Since open expression would probably be rated high on each of the five scales used in this study, perhaps a reciprocity effect is operating here. That

is, subjects may simply be responding "openly" to open statements.

Secondly, it is likely that a listener will "decide" to put forth effort to understand another only when the other is perceived as one who would recognize and appreciate attempts to do so. A person using open expression may be perceived as more likely to discern and acknowledge attempts to understand. Open expression may communicate a willingness to put forth effort to listen and collaborate in exploring the differences between the participants. Noting this willingness to listen, a person has more "reason" to respond empathically as a way of moving toward understanding.

Whatever the reason for the effects of open expression, results of this study strongly suggest that the expression of differences in intercultural encounters is received in a less defensive manner when the speaker takes personal responsibility for, states the origin of, and cites behavioral evidence for the feelings and perceptions. If the purpose of an intercultural encounter is to move toward understanding, then open expression tends to facilitate this process.

Attitude questionnaire. Results of the study lend partial support to the hypothesis that the open expression of differences leads to a greater desire to understand the differences rather than defend one's own viewpoint. Two strong factors emerged from a factor analysis of the attitude questionnaire. Factor one, labeled "Empathic Attitude," consisted of items referencing a

desire to know more about the other person for purposes of understanding. Factor two, labeled "Negative Affect," consisted of items referencing a low degree of anger, irritation, and desire to control.

An analysis of variance of the scale computed for factor one failed to show a statistically significant difference between experimental conditions at the traditional level of confidence (a .08 significance level was reached), although the means were in the appropriate direction. In fact, taken individually, several of the items that loaded on factor one showed a significant difference (using t-tests) between conditions. This partial support for the hypothesis might be interpreted in light of Berscheid and Walster's (1969) comments on the basis of attraction toward another. They reasoned that individuals might more often choose to associate with dissimilar others if there was no fear that they would be disliked by the stranger. They proposed that if one is confident that a dissimilar other will like him/her, then there would be less hesitancy to associate with that person. Results of their study supported this prediction. Perhaps, then, open expression communicated to the subjects that the other would be likely to accept them and receive them in a positive manner. This anticipation of being liked may have caused the desire to learn more about the other and understand the differences.

An analysis of variance of the scale score computed for factor two showed a highly significant difference between the open

and non-open conditions. While the items of this factor were not directly involved in the hypotheses, their emergence as an interpretable factor and the clear difference found between conditions may mean that a low degree of anger, irritation, and desire to control facilitates an empathic attitude. It seems reasonable that we find it easier to focus on understanding another rather than defending our own viewpoint when we are not angered by what they say to us. When we feel a strong need to show the other how they must be wrong or mistaken, we may focus mostly on our own wants, needs, and intentions. Anger, irritation, and desire to control are all indicative of a defensive reaction. Their presence would make it more difficult to move toward understanding.

Implications of Findings

Significance of study. The need is often recognized for increased tolerance of dissimilarity. Ours is an increasingly intercultural world, and contact between persons of different cultures is becoming more frequent. The present study points to a method for increasing tolerance for dissimilar views. It suggests that when opposing views are made using open expression rather than non-open expression, responses will be less defensive.

The question, of course, is whether or not it is possible to teach ourselves to express our views in an open manner. Hodges and Byrne (1972) ask the question in the following way:

> Can people learn to think and speak so as to express the idea: "There are arguments for X and arguments for Y. There is no way to determine conclusively whether X or Y is correct. Intelligent individuals of good will may come to support X or to support Y. I am strongly in favor of X for what I believe to be excellent reasons, but I may be wrong, and I respect your right to support Y"? Offhand, it appears much easier for people to learn to think and speak dogmatically and to reject their opponents with insulting epithets, rotten eggs, rocks, and bullets. (p. 317)

The findings in this study can have direct and immediate application to overseas orientation programs. If we can teach people to convey attitudes of open-mindedness and nonevaluativeness, the differences they encounter in a new culture may serve more as learning experiences rather than as barriers to communication. At least in American culture, "open expression" seems to convey these attitudes to the listener. Other facilitating message characteristics might be found for other cultures.

Limitations of study. Several limitations of the present study should be noted, and the findings are to be interpreted in light of these. First, as has been repeatedly pointed out, "open expression" is said to convey the facilitating attitudes of open-mindedness and nonevaluativeness in American culture. The same may not be true for other cultures. Owning one's statements may be seen as a form of egotism rather than open-

mindedness in some cultures. Therefore, caution should be taken in generalizing the results of this study.

Second, only the verbal aspects of open expression were considered in the present study. When someone interacts with another it is obvious that more than verbal cues are involved. It is possible that a person could nonverbally "override" the effects of open or non-open expression. Therefore, caution is again urged in generalizing the findings of this study.

Third, it must be kept in mind that communication is a transactional process, and the present study focused on only one aspect of that process. The receiver's response to the speaker was measured, but the study did not allow us to directly look at the dynamics of interaction. One is never sure how the results of a "static" study apply to dynamic interaction. This limitation must be kept in mind when interpreting the results of this study.

Finally, it must be kept in mind that the subjects in the present study responded in the context of a specific situation. They were asked to write down (not speak) their responses to a foreign student (not just any individual) who made certain specific criticisms (not just any criticisms or not just any opinion) to them in the context of a roommate relationship (not a casual acquaintance or stranger). It is especially important to note that "criticisms," and not the expression of other kinds of differences, were used as stimulus material for this study. While there is some reason to believe that these results might

be generalizable to other situations, we do so with caution.

Suggestions for future research. While the number of suggestions for continuing inquiry into the expression of differences are perhaps endless, two lines of research seem to follow directly from the present investigation. First, it has been repeatedly pointed out that open expression may be appropriate in only some cultures. The obvious question that follows from this has to do with the investigation of message characteristics that facilitate understanding in other cultures. What are the ways of expressing differences that produce a focus on the other rather than defensiveness in places such as Japan, Egypt, Columbia, etc.?

Second, it has been repeatedly mentioned that open-mindedness and nonevaluativeness are communicated nonverbally as well as verbally. Two questions arise from this consideration. What are the characteristics of the nonverbal messages that accompany open expression? What kinds of attributions are made when these codes are incongruent? If a set of specific characteristics could be determined for nonverbal expression then training programs might also be developed for teaching people this form of open expression.

Conclusion

This paper has focused on the expression of differences in intercultural encounters. Cultural differences are viewed as the "matrix in which (intercultural) communication takes place"

(Asuncion-Lande, 1980, p. 3). This means that it is within the context of cultural differences that intercultural communication originates or develops. Thus, the study of what happens when differences meet head on in intercultural encounters becomes an important focus of study in the field of intercultural communication. That is, it becomes important to research the dynamics of the intercultural communication process. The study reported in this paper takes one small step toward the direction of more focus on the dynamic nature of the intercultural communication process. It has attempted to show that the threat produced by cultural differences can be lessened through an appropriate manner of communicating these differences.

Ours is an increasingly intercultural world, and the communication of cultural differences affects the lives of everyone. Ideally, the response to this expansion of intercultural communication will be enhanced understanding and improved relations. Unfortunately, the response is often defensiveness and impaired relations. A concern with the manner of expressing differences, and its effect upon understanding and relations between cultures, seems highly relevant in a world of international trade, interdependent energy concerns, global arms buildup, and hostage-taking.

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Figure 1

Defensive/Empathic Communication Scales

The following are used for defining the categories of the scales which were used for evaluating the written responses:

Scale #1:

Evaluative: This person was passing judgment on the other by blaming or praising; by questioning his/her moral standards, values, or motives; or by making moral assessments.

Descriptive: This person was non-judgmental; he/she asked questions which were genuine requests for information; he/she did not ask or imply that the other change behavior or attitude.

Scale #2:

Control oriented: This person wanted to change the other's attitude or behavior; he/she implies that the other shouldn't think or act that way.

Problem oriented: This person's response communicates a desire to collaborate in defining a mutual problem and in seeking its solution.

Scale #3:

Unreceptive: This person seems to know all the answers, to require no additional data in defining or solving the problem and in seeking its solution.

Receptive: This person indicates a need for additional data; he/she seeks for further clarification of the problem.

Figure 1 (continued)

Scale #4:

Self oriented: This person seems to view the situation from his/her own frame of reference solely; he/she seems to be looking at the situation only from his/her own point of view; he/she doesn't take into account the way the other sees the situation.

Other oriented: This person seems to take into account the other's frame of reference; he/she seems to be looking at the situation from the other's point of view; he/she seems to be taking into account how the other sees the situation.

Scale #5:

Detached: This person gives no indication of putting forth effort to understand the other; he/she doesn't seem to care about whether or not the two of them reach an understanding of each other.

Involved: This person seems to be "trying" to understand what the other is saying; he/she seems to care about whether or not the two of them reach an understanding of each other's viewpoints.

Table 1

Summary of Analysis of Variance and Multiple Range Tests for Defensive/Empathic Communication Scales[1]

Scale	F Ratio	p	Means		
			non-open	open personal	open non-personal
Evaluative/ Descriptive	15.30	.001	1.98	4.60	3.47
Control oriented/ Problem oriented	12.25	.001	2.23	4.61_a	3.76_a
Unreceptive/ Receptive	10.03	.001	2.43	4.73	3.57
Self oriented/ Other oriented	10.18	.001	2.38	4.29_a	4.17_a
Detached/ Involved	8.90	.001	2.83	4.61_a	4.58_a

[1] Means in the same row which share the same subscript do not differ significantly at $p < .05$.

Table 2

Factor One and Associated Loadings: Empathic Attitude

Item	Orthogonal (Varimax)	Oblique	
		Pattern	Structure
If interaction continued, I don't think the two of us would be able to reach an understanding of each other's point of view.	.508	-.441	-.551
If this person invited me to his/her room to become better acquainted, I would accept the invitation.	.730	-.573	-.781
The foreign student's statements made me want to know more about why he/she feels this way.	.641	-.706	-.662
When I heard the foreign student's statements, I felt as if I had heard all I wanted to from this person.	.708	-.683	-.760

(continued next page)

Item	Orthogonal (Varimax)	Oblique	
		Pattern	Structure
If this foreign student was leading a discussion group in my speech class, I would be eager to join it.	.635	-.641	-.640
I have a real desire to learn more from this person.	.659	-.628	-.708

Table 3

Factor Two and Associated Loadings: Negative Affect

Item	Orthogonal (Varimax)	Oblique	
		Pattern	Structure
In stating my opinions, I felt that I wanted to show the foreign student how he/she must be wrong or mistaken.	.576	-.523	-.586
The foreign student's statements made me feel angry.	.676	-.630	-.731
Generally, I don't feel irritated by the foreign student's statements.	.647	-.634	-.694